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ARTICULATION IS AN OPPORTUNITY.

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THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH STANDARDS FOR THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN CALIFORNIA HAS LONG BEEN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SENIOR INSTITUTIONS. ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE A HIGH REGARD FOR THE WORK OF THE JUNIOR COLLEGE, THEY FEAR THAT COURSE CONTENT MAY DIMINISH BECAUSE OF THE GREAT DEMANDS ON THE JUNIOR INSTITUTIONS. THEY HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE UNIVERSITY-WIDE OFFICE OF RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS, WHICH SUBMITS PROPOSED COURSES TO THE UNIVERSITY'S DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS TO DECIDE IF THEY ARE UNIVERSITY-EQUIVALENT OR OTHERWISE APPROPRIATE FOR A DEGREE. THIS PROCESS, WHILE SLOW, DOES WORK AND TRANSFER PROBLEMS HAVE NOT BEEN GREAT. UNDER THE TRIPARTITE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION, HOWEVER, THE JUNIOR COLLEGE FEELS IT SHOULD HAVE MORE VOICE, ESPECIALLY INSOFAR AS THE PRESENT SYSTEM CURTAILS INNOVATION AND EXPERIMENT. THE ARTICULATION CONFERENCE INFORMALLY OVERSEES THE TRANSFER PROCESS AND, ALTHOUGH IT WORKS WELL, THE DECISION HAS STILL NOT BEEN LEFT TO THE JUNIOR COLLEGE. THIS AREA OF TENSION APPEARS TO BE LESSENING THROUGH INCREASED CONFERENCE AND COMMUNICATION. ARTICULATION IN CERTAIN SUBJECT FIELDS AND SEVERAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE UNIVERSITY AND THE JUNIOR COLLEGE HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT IN THIS MANNER, WITH MORE APPROACHING CONCLUSION. IT IS FELT THAT MORE UNIVERSAL AGREEMENTS IN GENERAL EDUCATION TRANSFERS CAN NOW BE DEVELOPED. THIS ARTICLE IS A REPRINT FROM THE "JUNIOR COLLEGE JOURNAL,"VOLUME 37, NUMBER 7, APRIL 1967. (HH)

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Articulation Is An Opportunity

The Articulation Conference in California Has Provided a Method for New Agreements

By Frederick C. Kintzer

"Vote Nears on 'Automatic' J. C. Credit Plan." This caption, appearing in the March 29, 1966, edition of the *Sacramento Bee*, highlighted a Coordinating Council on Higher Education subcommittee discussion on a controversial proposal to require the University of California as well as the state colleges to award students automatic credit for general education courses taken in California junior colleges.

University and state college representatives on the council opposed the motion. Junior college members vigorously supported it. The senior college people maintained that evaluation of junior college courses and the assigning of credit toward a bachelor's degree are prerogatives of university and state college faculties who should determine their own curriculum and graduation requirements. On the other hand, representatives from the state's junior colleges believed that the right of faculties to set curriculum should apply equally to junior college faculties. They also countered with a "proof-of-the-product" argument: "The record of junior college transfer students is an accepted fact. All we ask is a chance to prove it."

Two Strongly Defensible Arguments

Members of the council's subcommittee on education generally sided with the junior college viewpoint that junior college faculties should be permitted to establish their own lower-division courses to meet the requirements set by law or by the university or state colleges, and, furthermore, deserved guarantees that such work would not be later jeopardized by "arbitrary and capricious whims" of university and state college faculties.

Middle ground action on this hot issue was subsequently taken by the coordinating council which admonished both groups to develop without delay "mutually acceptable" policies and to submit a progress report in the spring of 1967. The council further prodded the senior institutions to reduce enrollments of lower-division students.

This recent exchange dramatized the critical need for solutions, specifically in California and generally throughout the country, to the problem of junior college—senior college and university articulation. Characteristic of all complex situations, both sides present strongly defensible arguments.

The University Case

The right to establish curriculum and to set standards for the baccalaureate degree has long been a faculty responsibility. The Board of Regents of the University of California formalized this responsibility soon after the close of World War I, giving to the faculty the privilege of establishing degree requirements and courses consistent with these requirements. One of the long-standing traditions of the academic world, this responsibility, professors feel, assures consistent academic quality.

Although professors, in general, have high regard for the work of the state's junior colleges, they fear "mickey mouse" courses which may be initiated if lower-division programs become the sole responsibility of the two-year institutions. Professors fear that "solids" are likely to be diluted—that students transferring as juniors will not be uniformly prepared to stand the rigorous competition of upper-division regulars.

At the same time, university deans and professors have confidence in the well-established system of junior college course status determination maintained by the university-wide O.R.S. (Office of Relations with Schools). Briefly explained, new courses announced by junior colleges as collegiate are, under this highly developed procedure, first sent by the receiving O.R.S. officer to the university's director of admissions for approval at the point of admission. The university accepts junior college courses equivalent to or nearly equivalent to courses it offers to its own freshmen and sophomores. It also accepts for credit junior college courses which are not like any university courses, but whose purposes, scope,

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and depth make them appropriate to a university degree. Those which have no counterpart on a campus are accepted "by title"—elective credit toward a university degree.

When notified that a course is acceptable, a junior college dean of instruction will frequently request an equivalency check to determine use in satisfying a particular college or major requirement. At this point the receiving university officer notifies his colleague stationed on the appropriate university campus, who in turn is held responsible for obtaining an official answer from a school or college, or, at times, an individual department.

This process, complex, taxing, and sometimes exasperatingly slow, does work. Transfer problems are not widespread. They are confined to the major requirement level which is primarily upper division.

Those who express concern over the redirection of University of California applicants to an alternate campus are regularly reminded that junior college transfer students have not been and will not be considered eligible for redirection. To that extent junior college applicants are given priority treatment in admissions. This briefly is the university's position.

The Junior College Case

California junior college leaders base their campaign for the right to set lower-division requirements unchallenged by senior transfer institutions on three principal arguments: (a) percentage of freshman-sophomore students now attending junior colleges; (b) success of junior college students in upper-division work; and (c) lack of opportunity in the present senior college controlled system to develop new and innovative programs—to modernize curriculums.

California public junior colleges, as Henry Tyler, executive secretary of the California Junior College Association, has frequently repeated, enroll more than two-thirds of all lower-division students. According to the state's master plan, junior colleges are a part of the tripartite system of higher education. If the partners are equal then the two-year institutions should not be required to submit outlines for validation of courses to the four-year institutions.

Junior college leaders further point to the success of their students after transfer as proof enough that two-year colleges should be allowed to establish their own general education patterns. They refer to the 1957 University of California, Berkeley-U.C.L.A., study conducted by Grace V. Bird (then associate director of relations with schools) and her associates. This comprehensive study gave substance to the frequently quoted statement: "Eligible" students transferring to the University of California (either Berkeley or U.C.L.A.) from California public junior colleges, after a brief adjustment period, do as well as native students.

Constant pressure from senior colleges to conform to their course outlines inordinately hinders junior college attempts to design courses appropriate to student needs. Junior college leaders ask the basic question: Do the university or state colleges have the right to pass judgment on our courses if the junior colleges are, in fact, equal partners with the university and state colleges in higher education? They point out that rigid adherence to university offerings curtails efforts to introduce innovation into their offerings. Experimental programs, say junior college people, are usually hard to "sell" to receiving senior institutions. They further assert that emphasis on meeting academic demands slows development of terminal curriculums.

This, in a word, is the junior college case.

Some Areas of Tension

University and senior college—junior college relationships in California appear, on the whole, to be moving ahead smoothly. The "Articulation Conference," a quadripartite statewide organization devoted to efficient progress of students from the high school through graduate school, informally supervises the articulation process. This unique organi-

"For Californians, innovations in the articulation process are best developed through the Articulation Conference."

zation exerts strong influence in maintaining open communication channels among the various segments of California public education.

As indicated earlier, the university accepts without question junior college courses equivalent to or nearly equivalent to courses it offers to its own lower-division students. It will also accept for elective, or "title," credit junior college courses which are not like any of its own courses, but whose purposes, scope, and depth make them appropriate to a university degree. In certain instances, however, it limits for various reasons the number of transfer credits in certain subject fields. Since, for example, few courses in physical education or in business education are offered by the university, few units in these areas are accepted from junior colleges. These are indeed areas of tension. Transferability decisions are not those of the junior colleges—and, in varying degrees, they resent it.

Occasional problems also occur in differing major field and graduation requirements among schools and colleges of the various university campuses. While stereotyping curriculum patterns throughout the total university would be an obvious mistake, it is crucial that efforts be continued to minimize such differences.

With the revolutionary change to year-round operations and a shift from the semester to the quarter calendar initiated in the fall of 1966, the university, immediately, and state colleges, in stages, have strategic opportunities to develop reciprocal or cooperative arrangements among their own units and, in general, to give transfer students the benefit of the doubt. Led by two new campuses, Irvine and Santa Cruz which count as their own graduation requirements any requirements completed on other university campuses, and several old campuses, U.C.L.A. in particular, significant progress should be acknowledged. According to a policy recently announced by the U.C.L.A. College of Letters and Science, certain categories of advanced standing students are allowed credit for the entire set of general university and college requirements. Total package reciprocity of breadth requirements is also practiced by the Santa Barbara, Riverside, and Davis Colleges of Letters and Science. ("Breadth requirements" is university terminology for its own general education requirements for graduation.)

Total package reciprocity, however, does not necessarily include credit on a new campus for only partial completion of graduation or breadth requirements on the initial campus. Basic decisions in this area, however, have been made. Further progress is therefore anticipated.

The tendency of university and senior college faculties to move courses from lower to upper division, making the latter requirements for further work, is a definite threat, particularly to the smaller junior colleges. This situation coupled with the obliteration of the line separating lower and upper divisions creates, at least for some of the state's two-year colleges, an impossible situation.

A recent count made on one university campus listed 163 separate courses as required of freshmen and sophomores by one or more departments. It is doubtful that any but the largest junior colleges could hope to come close to matching this number of courses named by a single senior institution.

This situation, however, is not all bad from the junior college point of view. Shifting of university courses from upper to lower divisions, notably in mathematics, increases the number of transfer-eligible courses which two-year colleges may now claim. Yet, it must be repeated that the decision is not theirs to make.

Conference Table Communication

Where articulation is not perfect, conference table communication is essential. Again, Californians feel that the Articulation Conference, through its liaison committee meetings and special subject matter conferences, holds greatest promise in preventing action before communication.

Occasionally, in spite of all precautions, changes in university curriculums are formalized before junior colleges are thoroughly aware of them. While such instances may, in part, illustrate an inclination of some professors to tell high schools and junior colleges what must be done, the explosive growth of knowledge, particularly in the sciences, presents an emergency situation creating a compulsion to increase the tempo of change. Most susceptible to rapid change are courses in the biological sciences, mathematics and foreign languages—disciplines in which revolutionary developments have in recent years affected schools up and down the educational ladder.

The Articulation Conference, the unique organization mentioned earlier, remains particularly active in these fields. Three large mathematics conferences, for example, have been sponsored since 1961. Recommended by special liaison committees of the Articulation Conference, these sessions include broad representation from California public high schools and public institutions of higher learning. Deeply

committed to action through influence rather than by force, this informal involuntary organization is used as a sounding board for new ideas in curriculum reform and a clearinghouse for grievances.

On the Plus Side

Perhaps the greatest advances in the improvement of articulation between junior and senior situations in California—including both the university and state colleges—are found in agreements recently formalized with the six colleges of the Los Angeles Junior College District. Reported in a document released by the district's college curriculum coordinator on September 12, 1966, articulation agreements were announced with the University of California and five state colleges. First appearing as a uniform numbering system for all Los Angeles colleges, the 1966-67 edition of this unique document includes (a) a university-wide list of courses acceptable for transfer to any campus of the university; (b) courses acceptable for meeting general education requirements of the U.C.L.A. Colleges of Letters and Science and Fine Arts, and (c) courses meeting general education requirements of five nearby state colleges.

Articulation agreements which involve groups of junior and senior colleges are close to reality in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Where one-to-one agreements may only compound the junior college problem, a group approach holds much promise. In the words of Albert Caliguiri, college curriculum coordinator, Los Angeles City Schools: "The foundation is now laid for the development of more universal agreements on general education transferability."

Junior college administrators are understandably pressing for an across-the-board junior standing for their graduates. Their course patterns, it is true, must parallel lower-division requirements of many senior institutions—an unreasonable, if not an impossible position.

The State of Florida has taken the longest step toward what junior college leaders would feel is an ideal system (see March 1967, *Journal*, pages 50 and 52). A statement prepared by the Florida State Department of Education and issued under the title: "Policies for Transferring Students among Florida's Public Institutions of Higher Learning," sets the basic formula:

> Junior college transfers shall be considered as having met the general education requirements of the receiving senior institution if the junior college has certified that the student has completed the lower-division general education requirements of the junior college. This policy should apply to all junior college transfers, both graduates and nongraduates.

While evaluation of this innovative plan is not within the scope of this article, certain questions would necessarily have to be answered if such a plan would aid rather than hinder transfer students. Among these are the following:

1. Are transfer students adequately prepared for upper-division work? What statewide criteria or standards guide junior college general education patterns? Where course titles are similar, is content reasonably standardized among the state's junior colleges?
2. Are transfer students realistically prepared for upper-division courses? Can junior college transfers compete with their university counterparts in specialized major field courses?

(On the California scene, the university answers "yes" to all of these questions.)

3. Is maximum cooperation assured from both two and four-year college faculties?

The Florida plan is innovative and daring, but no more daring than the University of California's acceptance of high school and junior college integrity to construct and offer their own courses.

While reforms in other states, including California, may not follow the Florida pattern, liberalization of transfer credit for advanced standing is inevitable. Certainly, senior institutions should cooperate to relieve pressures felt by junior colleges in their diversified efforts to serve many masters, but, on the other hand, should not be asked to relinquish responsibility for establishing their own lower-division requirements. Lower-division pattern dictation by the junior colleges is an opposite extreme. Solutions will not be found by merely transferring the "shoe to the other foot." Senior institutions should, additionally, avoid proliferating specific lower-division requirements which two-year colleges —particularly smaller ones—cannot hope to match or approach. But, by the same token, to put off requirements overburdens the upper-division student and tends to force five and six-year curriculums.

Cooperation among all institutions responsible for higher education must be sought and won. In James Nelson's words: "They must be willing to meet on the common ground of service to the student if articulation is to be successful." [1]

For Californians, innovations in the articulation process are best developed through the Articulation Conference. The great strength of this organization is that it carries the weight of agreement not of edict; it is dedicated to bringing about better understanding among the four segments of public education rather than to allow imposition of will of one upon another.

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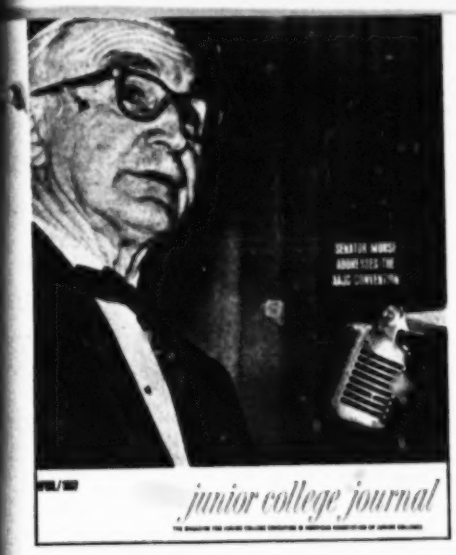
[1] Nelson, James H. "Guidelines for Articulation." *Junior College Journal*. 36:6, 26; March, 1966.



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